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the Old French texts, yet sufficiently free in their rendering to do away with any of the awkwardness usually resulting from translations of so literal a character as these. Besides the texts, the work comprises an introduction containing sufficient material on the life and works of Chrétien to meet the desires of the lay reader or to serve the needs of the student who is concerned only indirectly with Chrétien as a figure in mediaeval literature. The notes—not a few of which are taken, as indicated by the translator himself, from those found in the critical editions of the original texts by Professor W. Foerster—and the bibliography, which is complete enough to supply information even to students who have considerably more than a passing interest in Chrétien, not only meet, but even surpass the requirements for a volume of a popular nature.

Thus, briefly, Professor Comfort's work not only enables the reader of English to secure, at second hand, the material in Chrétien more conveniently than has so far been practicable; but it also gives him some idea of what scholarly research in this field entails. It is unfortunate, however, that the work should not suggest, at first glance, its full scope. The title, both on the cover and on the title-page, is *Erec and Enid, by Chrétien de Troyes*, yet it contains, not only *Erec et Enide*, but *Cligés*, *Le Chevalier de la Charrette (Lancelot)*, and *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*. As Professor Comfort points out,¹ these four romances may well be classed together, for they are the only works which are indisputably Chrétien's own, and all of them, with the exception of a small part of the *Lancelot*, were composed entirely by him. Furthermore, these are the only ones of his romances which deal with Arthurian matter. Such a title as *The Arthurian Romances of Chrétien de Troyes* would perhaps gain more attention than will the present one. At any rate, one of this sort would have been a boon to both bibliographer and student.

EDYTHE GRACE KELLY.

Columbia University.

¹ Introduction, p. viii.

TWO LINES OF GRILLPARZER

Bebst vor der Schlange? Schlange!
Die mich umwunden, die mich umstrickt,
Die mich verderbt, die mich getötet!
(*Die Argonauten*, ll. 1541–43.)

The two lines in question are the last two quoted. The second volume of the new Grillparzer edition,¹ this particular volume being edited by Reinhold Backmann, gives a comment on these lines, which, as well as several others there adduced and refuted, fails to find the real meaning of Grillparzer's words. The lines are perhaps not immediately plain when one first reads them, yet they are very important, since they express the emotional effect on Medea's mind of her own tragedy. They sum up as much of that tragedy as already lies in the past and they anticipate whatever there is left of it for the future.

The comment referred to is as follows:

V. 1541. Falsch ist es, wenn Pachaly auf Gesslers Hass im "Tell" verweist und meint, wie dieser vergesse es Jason Medea nie, dass sie ihn schwach gesehen, und das falle mehr ins Gewicht als der Schimpf und Spott, den Medea über den "Starken, Kühnen, Gewaltigen" ausgiesst. Davon kann bei Grillparzer keine Rede sein. Auch ein Ausbruch der Reue bei Medea, der Reue, ihm gefolgt zu sein (Verres) kann es doch nicht genannt werden. Gleich gar nicht aber hat Matthias recht, wenn er sagt: "Sie fühlt sich unwunden, umstrickt, verderbt und getötet von der Schlange des Geschickes, das ihrer wartet" und ihre Worte "Prophetische Worte" nennt, "die auf die Zukunft gehen." Was es aber ist? Eine Aufreizung Jasons? wohl nicht. Sie will die Wirkung des Schrecklichen bei Jason verdoppeln, ihn abhalten, zu gehen, es ist ihr letzter Versuch.

These interpretations do not seem to fit. The right one is both simple and evident. Throughout the *Gastfreund* and the *Argonauten* up to this point, Grillparzer has laid great stress on Medea's freedom. She is introduced to us as a huntress, a sort of Amazon, who despises one of her girls for being captured by the love of

¹ Grillparzers Werke, Im Auftrage der Reichshaupt- und Residenzstadt Wien, herausgegeben von August Sauer. 2. Bd. Wien und Leipzig, 1913.

a man. She continually emphasizes her independence of will. Now she herself has fallen a prey to the very servitude she so strongly condemned in Peritta. As if by a hypnotic spell Jason enslaves her will, prevents her from aiding her people, even makes her turn traitor and discover the way to the Fleece. Her defeat is as complete as his victory is ruthless and brutal. Immediately after this struggle between them, occurs the scene from which the lines in question are taken. Jason and Medea, against her bitter protests, are already in the cave where the dragon guards the coveted trophy. Once again, just before Jason opens the fatal doors behind which the danger lies, Medea implores him by her love to desist. Her inner resistance he brushes aside as easily as her outward resistance—no deeper humiliation could be imposed on Medea. The doors spring open, and the sight Jason sees is so terrifying that he shrieks aloud and rushes to the foreground. It is then that Medea, wildly laughing, begins her mad speech, overwhelming him with mockery and accusing him of being brave only when he has to deal with her. She asks him why he shrinks from the "Schlange," and in the next breath she calls him a "Schlange" (l. 1541). In the comment to l. 1506 the editor refers this word, "Schlange," to Jason, and it is therefore all the stranger that he should not refer the "Die mich umwunden, etc." to him as well, rather than, as he apparently does, to the real serpent. Medea tells Jason to go and be enfolded, entwined and destroyed by this dragon, as she has been enfolded, entwined and destroyed by his love. This idea also easily explains a subsequent line (1550), to which the comment is not very clear. Medea says:

Geh hin, mein süsser Bräutigam,
Wie züngelt deine Braut!

What does she mean by "süßes Bräutigam," and by calling the serpent Jason's "Braut"? She puts a world of irony and scorn into the first of these expressions. Her "gentle lover" has just a moment before subjected her to the bitterest humiliation of soul—she has just experienced his conception of the relation of "Bräutigam." What he has just done to her the serpent will now do to him, *i. e.*, become

his bride, or what is the same according to his methods, will enfold and destroy him.

Grillparzer thus shows Medea in a state of despair little removed from madness. And Jason exclaims:

Von mir weg, Weib, in deiner Raserei!
Mein Geist geht unter in des deinen Wogen!

Her mood here is the same as that we see later, only in an intensified form, when her final reckoning with her "gentle lover" occurs in the third part of the trilogy.

T. M. CAMPBELL.

Randolph Macon Woman's College.

BEDE'S *Death Song*

To a list of MSS. preserving versions of Bede's Death-Song, which R. Brotanek has recently printed (*Texte u. Untersuchungen*, Halle, 1913, p. 150 f.), should be added MS. No. LXIX of Stonyhurst College, in which, at fol. 15a, is found a copy of Cuthbert's letter to Cuthwin on the death of Bede, with the Anglo-Saxon verses (written as prose) on fol. 15b. The text of the poem has been printed already in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Mss. II*, p. 144 of the appendix. The following copy is the result of a fresh collation of that text with the Stonyhurst MS. recently made by Dr. Carleton Brown.

For þam ned fere
Næni wyrþeþ
Þances snotera
Poñ him þearf sy
To ge hiegenne
Ær his heonen gänge
Hpæt his gaste
godes opþe yfeles
Æfter deaþe heonon
Demed þeorþe.

It will be seen that the Stonyhurst text belongs among the more numerous versions preserved in the Southern dialect. Comparison with the texts printed by Brotanek makes it appear that it agrees exactly with the version of the poem in MS. Digby 211.

CHARLOTTE D'EVELYN.

Bryn Mawr College.